United Nations A/C.3/56/L.10

General Assembly

Distr.: Limited
12 October 2001

Original: English

Fifty-sixth session
Third Committee
Agenda item 108
Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

Benin, China, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Panama, Paraguay, Russian Federation, Thailand, Turkey and United States of America: draft resolution

A United Nations literacy decade: education for all

The General Assembly,

Recalling that in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1] the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights[2] and the Convention on the Rights of the Child[3] the right of every individual to education is recognized as inalienable,

Recalling also its resolutions 42/104 of 7 December 1987, by which it proclaimed 1990 as International Literacy Year, and 54/122 of 17 December 1999, by which it requested the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and Member States and with other relevant organizations and bodies, to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session a proposal for a United Nations literacy decade, with a plan of action and possible time frame for such a decade,

Recalling further the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 8 September 2000[4] in which Member States resolved to ensure that, by the year 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and that girls and boys will have equal access to all levels of education, which requires a renewed commitment to promote literacy for all,

[1] Resolution 217 A (III).
[2] See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.
[3] Resolution 44/25, annex.
[4] Resolution 55/2.

01-57780 (E) 121001

Recalling also the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development[5] and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development[6] and the outcome document of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, entitled "World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world",[7]

Recalling further its resolution 55/94 of 4 December 2000, entitled "United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004, and public information activities in the field of human rights",

Reaffirming its resolution 49/184 of 23 December 1994, in which it appealed to all Governments to step up their efforts to eradicate illiteracy and to direct education towards the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Convinced that literacy is the key to learning to learn and one of the most basic learning needs of children, young people and adults and that a meaningful use of literacy for all represents quality education and lifelong learning for all,

Recognizing that illiteracy is intertwined with poverty and social exclusion, while literacy is intertwined with empowerment, democracy and social development,

Welcoming the Dakar Framework for Action, adopted at the World Education Forum in April 2000, in which commitments were made to achieve a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015 and to improve all aspects of quality education, especially in literacy and essential life skills,

Acknowledging the activities undertaken at national and regional levels for the Education for All 2000 assessment of progress towards achieving the goals of education for all, and stressing further the need to redouble efforts in order to meet the basic needs of people of all age groups, particularly girls and women,

Recognizing that, despite the significant progress in basic education, especially the increase in primary school enrolment coupled with a growing emphasis on the quality of education, major problems, both emerging and continuing, still persist, which require even more forceful and concerted action at the national and international levels so as to achieve the goal of education for all,

Deeply concerned about the persistence of the gender gap in education, which is reflected by the fact that nearly two thirds of the world's adult illiterates are women,

Urging Member States, in close partnership with international organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations, to promote the right to education for all and to create conditions for all for learning throughout life,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Secretary-General and of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

---

[5] *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution I, annex I.

[6] Ibid., annex II.

[7] See resolution S-24/2, annex.

Organization, entitled "Draft proposal and plan for a United Nations literacy decade";[8]

2. *Proclaims* the ten-year period beginning on 1 January 2002 the United Nations Literacy Decade;

3. *Welcomes* the vision for a United Nations Literacy Decade, as contained in the report of the Secretary-General and of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,[8] and invites Governments and the relevant international organizations to submit their comments and proposals with a view to developing a well-targeted and action-oriented plan for the Decade;

4. *Invites* the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, to develop an international plan of action for the Decade, taking into account the views expressed by Governments and the relevant international organizations, as requested in paragraph 3 of the present resolution, and to submit it to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session;

5. *Appeals* to all Governments to reinforce political will and develop more inclusive policy-making environments in which active and wide-ranging participation in literacy promotion can take place, in particular to enhance partnerships, commit resources and devise innovative strategies for reaching the poorest and most marginalized groups, and for seeking alternative school and non-school approaches to learning with a view to achieving the goals of the United Nations Literacy Decade;

6. *Also appeals* to all Governments to redouble their efforts to achieve their own goals of education for all by setting firm targets and timetables, where possible, including gender-specific education targets and programmes to combat the illiteracy of women and girls, and, by working in active partnership with communities, associations, the media and development agencies, to reach those targets;

7. *Urges* all Governments to take the lead in the coordination of the Decade activities at the national level, bringing all relevant national actors together in sustained dialogue in policy formulation, implementation and evaluation of literacy efforts;

8. *Reaffirms* that literacy for all is at the heart of basic education for all and that creating literate environments and societies is essential for achieving the goals of eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy;

9. *Appeals* to all Governments and to economic and financial organizations and institutions, both national and international, to lend greater financial and material support to the efforts to increase literacy and achieve education for all goals, through, inter alia, the 20/20 initiative, as appropriate;

10. *Invites* Member States, the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system as well as relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to intensify further their efforts to implement effectively

[8] A/56/114 and Add.1-E/2001/93 and Add.1.

the World Declaration on Education for All,[9] the Dakar Framework for Action and the relevant commitments and recommendations to promote literacy made in recent major United Nations conferences and at their five-year reviews with a view to better coordinating their activities and increasing their contribution to development within the framework of the United Nations Literacy Decade;

11. *Requests* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to take the lead role in coordinating and implementing at the international level the activities envisaged within the framework of the United Nations Literacy Decade;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to consider, in cooperation with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, establishing a voluntary fund for the Decade, with special provision for the support of literacy efforts of developing countries;

13. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of all Member States as well as the relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;

14. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-seventh session the question entitled "The United Nations Literacy Decade".

---

[9] *Final Report of the World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs, Jomtien, Thailand, 5-9 March 1990*, Inter-Agency Commission (UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank) for the World Conference on Education for All, New York, 1990, appendix I.